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842ND ENGINEER COMPANY DEPLOYS FOR WAR

The South Dakota Army National Guard's 842nd Engineer Company was activated for federal service Wednesday during a ceremony at the Donald E. Young Center on the Black Hills State University campus in Spearfish. The Northern Hills-based 842nd mobilized nearly 160 Soldiers for a one-year deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"For your courage, for your persistence and determination to resist terror, wherever it may be found, and to take the war on terror to the enemy, we thank you," said Gov. Dennis Daugaard, during the ceremony.

The 842nd's mission will be to provide horizontal construction and engineering support such as building and maintaining roads, developing airfields, and providing limited clearing operations.

"The unit is also capable of building entry and traffic control points, as well as building up the bases the Soldiers live on to improve the quality of life of our service members," said Capt. Allen Godsell, 842nd commander. "We are also able to take our mission out into the communities of Afghanistan – working to improve the quality of life of the Afghans – and share that knowledge with them so they can take part in building their own country."

The 842nd is located in three Black Hills communities with their headquarters located in Spearfish and two detachments in Sturgis and Belle Fourche.

This is the second mobilization for the 842nd, having deployed to Iraq for 16 months in 2003-2004.

The unit contains 43 veterans, and it's this experience the unit's leadership will rely on to help develop the younger Soldiers. The 842nd members will depart for their mobilization station at Fort Bliss, Texas, on Friday, where they will spend another month in-processing into the active-duty Army and conduct more theater-specific training before departing to Afghanistan.



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VA'S FIRST TRIBAL CEMETERY GRANT GOES TO ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki announced that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has awarded the Rosebud Sioux Tribe a grant of \$6,948,365 for 100 percent of allowable costs associated with establishing the Sicangu Akicita Owicahe Veterans Cemetery in Mellette County, S.D. Charles Claussen and Kevin Bowen from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs attended the groundbreaking ceremony on Monday, September 19, near Mission.

"This is the first veterans cemetery grant that the VA is awarding to a Native American government," said Secretary Shinseki. "We are proud to begin working with these sovereign tribes to provide additional burial benefits where veterans live."

Public Law 109-461, signed into law Dec. 22, 2006, authorized the Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to award veterans cemetery grants to tribal governments in the same manner that they are given to U.S. states and territories.

This grant will fund construction of the main entrance, an administration building, a maintenance facility, roads, an assembly area, a committal service shelter, pre-placed crypts, burial areas for cremated remains, traditional burial areas, columbaria for cremated remains, landscaping, a memorial walkway and supporting infrastructure. The project will develop approximately 14.4 acres of the 74-acre property on the Rosebud Reservation near Mission, S.D., and will include 600 pre-placed crypts, 544 in-ground sites for cremated remains and 32 columbarium niches.

The VA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program is designed to complement VA's 131 national cemeteries across the country. Since 1980, the program has awarded grants totaling more than \$438 million to establish, expand or improve 81 veterans cemeteries in 41 states or territories including Guam and Saipan. These cemeteries provided nearly 28,000 burials in 2010.

Tribal members who are military veterans with a qualifying discharge and have completed a period of active duty service as required by law, along with their spouses and eligible dependent children, may be buried in the veterans cemetery.

For more information, contact Orlando Morrison, Rosebud Sioux director of Veterans Affairs, at 605-747-2593.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000 or from the Internet at

<http://www.cem.va.gov>



VETERANS STAND DOWN HELD IN ABERDEEN

South Dakota veterans in northeastern South Dakota were invited to participate in the Veterans Stand Down on Tuesday, September 20, in Aberdeen.

The Stand Down continues a tradition of bringing together state, federal and private agencies in a free service fair for veterans in need of assistance. The Stand Down is a grassroots, community-based intervention program designed to assist soldiers and veterans combat life. Medical, legal, disability, education and pension were some of the topics discussed with the veterans.

CVSOs Thomas Gohn, Ron Hoffer and Gordon Richard participated in the Stand Down, as did Steve Oliva, field officer for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SD DVA). They greeted veterans and assisted them with questions regarding benefits, claims and programs.



MILITARY FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

Thirteen South Dakota schools have been awarded the designation of "Military Friendly School" from the *G.I. Jobs* magazine. Named to the list are:

- Augustana College in Sioux Falls,
- Black Hills State University in Spearfish
- Dakota State University in Madison
- Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell
- Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown
- Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell
- Mount Marty College in Yankton
- National American University in Rapid City
- Northern State University in Aberdeen
- South Dakota School of Mines & Technology in Rapid City
- University of South Dakota in Vermillion
- University of Sioux Falls in Sioux Falls
- Western Dakota Technical Institute in Rapid City

To learn more about the G.I. Jobs magazine list, go to: <http://www.militaryfriendlyschoools.com/>

WOMEN VETERANS HEALTHCARE OPEN HOUSE

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Black Hills Health Care System invites Women Veterans to gather to meet other Women Veterans and learn more about VA health care services available to women. An Open House will be held at the Rapid City Public Library, 610 Quincy Street in Rapid City on Thursday, September 29, between 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm in the Helen Hoyt Room – Downstairs

All women who have served in the military or who are currently serving are encouraged to stop at the open house to receive health care information, learn about changes for women veterans and enjoy refreshments.

The Open House is an effort to reach over 2000 female veterans in our area and increase awareness that VA provides quality care to women. Mother, daughter, sister, wife, partner ... veteran. The VA cares for the whole woman. You served; you deserve the best care anywhere.

For more information or questions please call Dianna Monahan RN, VA Black Hills Women Veterans Program Manager at 605-720-7247.

WOMEN VETERANS

*You served, you deserve
★ the best care anywhere.*



GOLD STAR MOTHERS DAY

Governor Dennis Daugaard has signed an Executive Proclamation proclaiming Sunday, September 25, 2011, as "Gold Star Mother's Day" in South Dakota. Gold Star Mother's Day is observed in the United States on the last Sunday in September each year. In his proclamation, Governor Daugaard encourages South Dakotans to become aware of the South Dakota's Gold Star Mothers and their efforts to continue to honor our sons and daughters who paid the ultimate sacrifice for all our freedoms.

Each year the President of the United States is requested to issue a proclamation to call on United States government officials to display the nation's flag on all government buildings, to call on the people to display the flag and hold community gatherings to publicly express the love, sorrow and reverence to those who are Gold Star Mothers and their families.

In recognition of South Dakota's servicemen and women who died since 9-11, the "Fallen Heroes Banners" will be on display in the east wing of the South Dakota State Capitol September 24-25.

The Gold Star mothers instilled the values that led these brave men and women to service. These families have sacrificed more than most can ever imagine, and yet they still find the courage and strength to comfort other families and support our veterans.



FALLEN HEROES BANNERS TO BE DISPLAYED AT CAPITOL

The "Fallen Heroes" banners will be on display in the east wing of the South Dakota State Capitol Saturday and Sunday, September 24-25. The Capitol will be open from 8:00 am—5:00 pm.

The banners were created in honor of South Dakota military personnel who lost their lives in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. This display provides a respectful reflection of the brave sacrifices made by our American military heroes. To date there are 34 banners in the display.

Displaying the banners this week-end is in support of the "Gold Star Mothers" observation on Sunday, September 25.

CW2 Hans Gukeisen	US Army
PFC Sheldon Hawk Eagle	US Army
CW2 Scott Saboe	US Army
CPT Christopher Soelzer	US Army
SGT Dennis Morgan	SDARNG
SSG Cory Brooks	SDARNG
LCPL Jeremy Bohlman	USMC
LCPL Joseph Welke	USMC
PFC Gunnar Becker	US Army
SSG Jason Montefering	US Army
CW2 Paul Pillen	SDARNG
SPC Daniel Bartels	US Army
SFC Richard Schild	SDARNG
SSG Daniel Cuka	SDARNG
CPL Brett Lundstrom	USMC
SGT Jeremiah Boehmer	US Army
SPC Patrick Herried	US Army
SGT Allen Kokesh Jr.	SDARNG
SSG Gregory Wagner	SDARNG
SSG Robb Roling	US Army
SSG Zachary Tomczak	US Army
1LT Thomas Martin	US Army
CPL Tanner O'Leary	US Army
SRA Jonathan Vega Yelner	USAF
SPC Estell Turner	US Army
SSG Jeremy Vrooman	US Army
SSG LeRoy Webster	US Army
SSG Brian Berky	USAF
SGT Eduvigis Guadalupe Wolf	US Army
SSG Shane Barnard	US Army
SGT Israel Paul O'Bryan	US Army
CPT Dale Goetz	US Army
SRA Michael Hinkle	USAF
SSG Lex Lewis	US Army



WELCOME HOME AND THANK YOU

Friends and family gathered at Range Road Armory in Rapid City to welcome home nine members of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Detachment 3, A Company, 641st Aviation Regiment as they returned home after a yearlong deployment to Iraq in support of Operation New Dawn Saturday, September 17.

The 641st was stationed at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, where they transported more than two million pounds of cargo, 8,000 passengers and flew more than 150 missions, all at night, using Night Vision Goggles.

"It's safer at night; you have the cover of darkness," said CW3 Fred Loofbourow, Det. 3 commander, on why the 641st conducted all of their missions at night. "It's also a performance issue; you have better year-round mission capability because it's cooler at night, so you get better performance out of the aircraft, better lift capability and better distance."

This is the 641st's third deployment since Sept. 11, 2001. They deployed twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom first from January 2005-January 2006, again from October 2007-May 2008 and their latest deployment from October 2010-September 2011 in support of Operation New Dawn.

"This is a testament to the high value of professionalism of this particular unit and the value that it serves to the United States Armed Forces and to the quality of the Soldiers in this unit," said Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, South Dakota National Guard adjutant general.

The aviation regiment, consisting of 33 personnel, from four detachments located in Oregon (Headquarters), Washington, Oklahoma and South Dakota, provide command, control and communications, staff transport and liaison, casualty transport and air movement of critical equipment, supplies and personnel.

"The South Dakota National Guard has a tremendous legacy, it goes all way back to 1862, but

never in our long history has the National Guard been better trained, better equipped or more heavily relied upon than they are today," said Reisch. "This unit, the 641st, has enhanced and added to that legacy by the outstanding way that they have performed this past year in Iraq."



UPCOMING EVENTS

September 23—Stand Down—Sioux Falls

September 24-25—Fallen Heroes Banner Displayed—SD State Capitol

September 25—Gold Star Mothers Day

September 27—Women Veterans Meet & Greet—Sioux Falls VFW Post

September 28—Capitol for a Day—Canton

September 29—VA BHHCS Open House for Women Veterans

October 13—Stand Down—Rapid City

October 14—Women's Veterans Conference—Holiday Inn City Centre—Sioux Falls

October 14-16—VABHHCS Women's Retreat

November 11—Grand Opening of Women of War Center

November 11—Veterans Day

December 10—National Wreaths Across America Remembrance

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